

THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO PRAY FOR THE MISSIONARY CAUSE.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN BOSTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1827,

BEFORE THE

Society for Propagating the Gospel

AMONG

THE INDIANS AND OTHERS IN NORTH AMERICA.

BY

EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.

Bartlett Prof. Sac. Rhet. Theol. Sem. Andover.

WITH THE

Report of the Select Committee.



CAMBRIDGE:
HILLIARD, METCALF, AND COMPANY.
1828.

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DY A few sentences of the following discourse were omitted in the delivery, on
account of the preacher's state of health at the time.

SERMON.

COLOSSIANS IV. 3.

Withal, praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I also am in bonds.

THIS exhortation was not addressed merely to the officers of the church, but to the brethren generally. So we must conclude from the subsequent direction respecting the whole epistle, that it should be publicly read to the Colossian church, and also to the church at Laodicea. Paul meant then to solicit the prayers of common Christians in this case, and that not in behalf of himself only, but of himself and his fellow laborers in the ministry ; for he was accustomed to use words with precision.*

The thing for which the Apostle wished these Christians to pray was, that God would dispose the hearts of men to receive the gospel, and grant to its preachers both the gifts and the opportunities requisite for the successful exhibition of its truths. “Mystery of Christ,” according to the phraseology

* When he meant only *himself*, he commonly said, *I* and *me*, not *we* and *us*, a form of expression sometimes adopted by preachers now, from false modesty, or false taste, though a gross departure from the idiom of the language which they speak. “Praying also for us, [ministers of Christ] that God would open to us [ministers] a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I [Paul] also am in bonds.”

of Paul, includes all the disclosures of the gospel ; and especially that arrangement, so hard to be understood by a Jew, by which a free participation in its privileges should be extended to the Gentiles. It was among the Gentiles that Paul was chiefly commissioned to labor. For their instruction he was solemnly set apart, after the Holy Ghost commanded that he and Barnabas should be separated to this work. He spent his life not as the stated pastor of one flock, but as a *missionary*. His field of labor was not one village or city, but the *world*. With indefatigable zeal to plant churches and to propagate the religion of Christ, he traversed over and over Judea, and Asia Minor, and Italy.

This accorded with the system of operation instituted by Christ himself, as the only one then adapted to the state of the world. It was a *missionary* system. The first preachers were literally *missionaries*, as the term *Apostle* imports ; that is, men *sent forth*, with a sacred commission to "preach the kingdom of God." They were specially instructed by their Master how to conduct, in the various circumstances which should attend them, while going from city to city, in the execution of their work : and the Acts of the Apostles is a brief history of the character sustained, the labors performed, the trials endured, and the good accomplished, by these missionaries of Christ, in this first age of missions.

It is precisely in this interesting light, that Paul,

in the text, presents these men, and urges on their behalf a claim to be remembered in the prayers of their brethren ; “praying also for us.” And it is in this view of the text, that I deduce from it, as the present subject of discourse,

The general duty of Christians, to pray for those who are engaged in the work of missions.

In urging this duty, I shall be satisfied if I can impress on my hearers the combined weight of those considerations, which show, *from the magnitude and nature of this work, the incompetence of human instrumentality to its accomplishment, without divine aid.*

In the first place, this work has a *great object*. This is nothing less than to promote the glory of God, in the sanctification and salvation of men. Such was the object of the Apostles. Take any of their statements, in which the chief end of their ministrations is explained. For what purpose does Paul say that he was called, by a voice from heaven, to go to the Gentiles ?—“ To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith.” The men to whom he was sent as a Christian Missionary then, were involved in the darkness of ignorance, and error, and guilt. So he expected to find them, and so he did find them. Even at Corinth, renowned as it was for human learning, all the great truths of reli-

gion were either absolutely unknown, or mingled with gross absurdities. Athens too, the light of Greece, was shrouded in moral darkness. Blazoned as her name was, with her list of illustrious men, all that her genius could boast, under the name of knowledge, was but splendid *ignorance* in the eye of the Apostle, when he saw the inscription on her altar, “*to the unknown god.*” Not her peasantry merely, but her philosophers and scholars were in moral darkness. They needed the sanctifying influence of the gospel to open their eyes, by a spiritual illumination. They needed also intellectual teaching on the great truths and duties of religion; for neither could perfect light enable men to see without eyes, nor perfect eyes without light.

But why should these men of Corinth and Athens be disturbed in their ignorance and error, by Missionaries from Judea? Why should Apostles be sent to turn them from the “darkness” of a false religion, to the “light” of Christianity? The answer is one which Paul says came from heaven;—not ambiguous, like the responses of ancient oracles, but simple, intelligible,—full of meaning. It is this;—“*that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith in Christ.*” A great object then was to be achieved. Let any one decide for himself, how important it is that men should be prepared for heaven, by sanctification, and the forgiveness of their sins, and then he has decided on the magni-

tude of the Apostle's work. You see at once why these illustrious preachers took so much pains to spread the religion of Christ, when you have admitted that this religion contains the only adequate means of instruction to the spiritually ignorant, and of reformation and salvation to the guilty. Well might they be in earnest in this case. They aimed at a *great* object.

But brethren, what was true and important on this subject in the Apostolic age, is substantially so at this moment. The gospel is the same;—the character, and wants, and duties, and destination of man the same; his spiritual maladies are no less deplorable, and the means of his moral restoration must be no less efficacious now, than when the gospel was first published. Modern missions then, if properly conducted, are only a continuance of the work which the Apostles began. The man who engages in this, from becoming motives, has the same object with Paul. Does he go to the heathen?—it is *literally* the same. To the unevangelized in Christian lands?—it is *essentially* the same. He aims not indeed, in this latter case, to turn men from idols of wood and stone, but from that love of the world which is idolatry, to the love and service of God.

Now, if this work is so important in its object, if it immeasurably surpasses in magnitude every human enterprise; if in the benevolence of its aims it is truly a godlike work;—then doubtless it de-

serves to be commended to God, in the prayers of Christians. This will be more apparent as we proceed; for,

In the *second* place, it is a work which has to encounter *great obstacles*.

Aside from the testimony of the Bible, every preacher has painful opportunities to witness in many to whom the gospel is addressed, a stubborn insensibility to all its interesting truths and motives. In the most intelligent congregations of Christendom, not a few sit under the preaching of the word, from sabbath to sabbath, with utter indifference. The same men who, in scenes of worldly amusement or business, are full of alacrity and spirit, when they come to the house of God, and are addressed by all that is solemn in his prohibitions, all that is fearful in his threatenings, all that is moving in the expostulations of his love, are, notwithstanding, as much *at ease*, as though they *knew* the gospel to be a *fable*. Surely then the Missionary to the heathen, or to' the unevangelized in Christian lands, may expect to find the same insensibility, aggravated perhaps in many instances, by a thousand causes, operating to render it still more stubborn. Nor is insensibility all. For when this is assailed by the power of the gospel, with all that it contains to restrain, to condemn, and to alarm careless men, what seemed but indifference, often stands forth in the form of impatience, and downright hostility.

Here lies the grand obstacle to success in preaching the gospel ; an obstacle which argument and eloquence are insufficient to remove. When Demosthenes, by remonstrance and entreaty, roused the Athenians to resist Philip, it was but a *partial* and *temporary* effect at which he aimed. His end was achieved, though these Athenians retained all the pride and passions of their hearts. But the Christian preacher aims at nothing less than a *permanent transformation* of men from sin to holiness. He wages war with every thing in their hearts, that renders them unfit for heaven.

This brings us exactly to the point where the Apostles, deeply feeling their own insufficiency, solicited the prayers of Christians in their behalf. “Brethren, *pray* for us,” said Paul. Our work is great and difficult. It surpasses human wisdom and strength. “Pray for me, that utterance may be given to me ; that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak, the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds.” The same exhortation, enforced by similar motives, he often repeated. Plainly he felt that, in preaching a religion, which aims to overcome the obduracy, pride, and prejudices of the human heart, he needed light from heaven to guide him, and strength from heaven to give him courage and success. It was with this same truth in his eye, that this Apostle said, most emphatically : “Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth, but God, that giveth the in-

crease." Just so do men of missionary spirit believe and feel now. Just so, we must presume did the Founders of this Missionary Society believe and feel, when they adopted as its motto,—"NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD." Upon all who pray for the prosperity of Zion,—and who regard divine influence as necessary in any case, to be sought in prayer for the success of ministers in their work, missionaries may well prefer the claim,—"pray for us also."

The magnitude of this cause, and the duty of praying for those engaged in it, will be more obvious, if we consider,

In the *third* place, that the work involves *great consequences.*

For the sake of illustrating my meaning, make the supposition, that the Apostles, through mistake or want of fidelity, had preached a system of doctrines, essentially different from those which they received from their divine Master; and had formed churches, and penned their epistles, on the same principles. Then the pure gospel, which has shined with benignant light upon the world, for so many ages, must have been extinguished in the first century. Such results, however, could not follow the labors of those who were under infallible, divine guidance in their instructions.—But no similar security exists, in regard to ministers and missionaries now. Men who are sent as evangelists to Africa, or the islands of the Pacific,—or the native

tribes or new settlements of our own country, you may, without any presumption, suppose liable to mistake, or to the waywardness of human passion and imperfection. They may be left to preach themselves rather than Christ,—to proselyte men to their own narrow and sectarian views, rather than to build them up in the most holy faith. Such a perversion of the gospel, in an important heathen mission, would be permanently, and beyond measure calamitous in its effects. And just in proportion as counteracting influences should be wanting, in any domestic mission, the errors and weaknesses of those by whom it is conducted, would be in like manner calamitous. Men intrusted with interests so high and sacred, need the prayers of Christians, that they may be taught, by the Spirit of all truth, what and how they shall teach others.

Men who are engaged in the work of missions ought to be remembered in the prayers of Christians, because,

In the *fourth* place, this work involves *great labors and sacrifices*.

It were vain to think of illustrating this topic, by an extended review of missions; and yet, to do it justice in any measure, requires an amplification hardly consistent with my present limits.

I need not say to this assembly, that the sacred office, in the most eligible circumstances, involves *great labors*. Give to the Christian pastor exemption from secular cares, by a competent support;—

give him his pleasant home, his library, his circle of friends,—all that can facilitate his efforts, in the affections of his people;—but suppose him, at the same time, to possess the *heart of a devoted minister*, and he is the last man to think of ease and indulgence. He has undertaken to watch for souls, as one that must give account. The charge of Jehovah sounds in his ears, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman: when I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt die; if thou dost not *speak*, to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at *thy hand*.” He remembers this charge;—he anticipates that glorious, dreadful day when he shall give account of his ministry. And is he the man to calculate on ease and amusement? to compute how little official service will satisfy his people? He the man to mingle in circles of fashion, and luxury, and indulgence? He cannot stoop to these. He is doing a *great* work. He goes on, from day to day, under a weight of cares, that would break his spirits, and crush his frame to the dust, could he not lean on an arm that is almighty.

Turn your thoughts now brethren, from the stated pastor to the missionary, and see what accumulation of labors and sacrifices, are involved in his work. Read the history of Paul, as detailed in the Acts of the Apostles, and contrast his travels, his efforts, his privations, with what is ordinarily to be done or endured in pastoral life. His support came

partly from limited, occasional collections of charity, but chiefly from the labor of his own hands. His home was every where;—the present post of duty,—Palestine, Greece, Italy,—that place in which, for the time being, he could do most for Christ and the church, was his home. The commission of apostleship which he received, contained a premonition that he should suffer great things for Christ. When he entered on his work, he was told that “bonds and afflictions” awaited him; and so it proved. After the experience of more than twenty years, this great benefactor of the world, said of himself and his associates; “Unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; we are made as the offscouring of all things unto this day.” I know not how it is with others, but for myself I can say, that, in all the records of philanthropy and religion, no example of patient endurance and untiring zeal, from Christian motives, has ever made so tender an appeal to my heart, as the following rapid and affecting retrospect of this Apostle;—“ Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils

by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” Let the slothful, self-indulgent minister look at Paul, and be ashamed. O what heart, not sustained by more than human principles, could have been prepared for sufferings and achievements like these ? Well might this exalted man say to Christians, in the quiet and security of their own homes,—“Brethren, pray for us.”

Among modern missionaries, though literal persecution and chains have seldom been known, severe labors and privations are common. A few examples, already familiar I am aware to many of my hearers, may illustrate this remark. The first is an incidental glance at the life of David Brainerd, from a cursory sketch of his own pen. “I live,” said he, “in the most lonely desert, about eighteen miles from Albany. My diet consists chiefly of boiled corn, and bread baked in the ashes. My lodging is a little heap of straw, laid upon some boards, a little above the ground ; for it is a log room, without any floor that I lodge in. My work is exceeding hard : I travel on foot a mile and a half almost daily, and back again ; for I live so far from my Indians.” Again he said, “In my weak state of body I was distressed for want of suitable food. I

had no bread, nor could I get any ; but through divine goodness, I had some *meal*, of which I made little cakes. In these circumstances, I felt sweetly resigned, and blessed God as much as if I had been a king.—For the conversion of the heathen I long and love to be a pilgrim ; I would not exchange my present mission, for any other business in the world.” Here again is heavenly benevolence, fortifying the heart to encounter hardship and suffering, sickness, poverty, and toil, in the missionary work. Let the ambitious minister look at Brainerd, and learn humility. Let the complaining minister look at Brainerd, and learn contentment. Let the self-indulgent, slothful minister look at Brainerd, and be *ashamed*.

The closing scene of Henry Martyn’s life makes a similar appeal to the hearts of Christians. In this youthful missionary we see at once the flame of genius united with the flame of piety ; the man of deep erudition, and classical taste, inspired with holy love to the heathen. This scholar broke away from his beloved university, and his books ; this man of sensibility left his country and his father’s house, to go, and wear out, and die, for the good of distant strangers. The last journey he undertook was through a barbarous country. Sometimes he was fainting under a burning sun, sometimes groping his way at midnight ; often without food, always without comfortable lodging ; at one time, parched with thirst ; at another drenched with rain, by night and by day.

While his delicate frame was exhausted with fatigue, or agonized with pain, he had often no pillow for his aching head but the damp ground. Yet in communing with his God, and reflecting on his everlasting rest, he had a heavenly tranquillity within. Say, brethren, when you follow in your thoughts this intrepid pioneer of the gospel, on his embassy of love to the wretched inhabitants of Persia, and see him sinking into a premature grave, among distant strangers ; with no friendly bosom to sympathise, no friendly hand to minister to his sufferings, even in the hour of dissolution ;—say, shall not such men be consoled at least by the assurance that they are not forgotten in the prayers of Christians ?

Tell me not that such trials have no parallel in the *ordinary* lot of missionaries. To the same *degree* they certainly are not common. But does it require no self-denial to plant the standard of the cross amid the eternal snows of Greenland ? None to preach the gospel under the withering sun of Africa or India ? To say nothing of those apostolic men who have conducted the Moravian missions, would the time permit, I could give a heart-stirring recital from the papers of such men as Hall, and Parsons, and Fisk, our own distinguished missionaries in the East, now gone from their labors to their rest and their reward. I could tell of sacrifices and *sufferings* too, endured by other beloved men, who are still engaged both in foreign and do-

mestic missions. The truth is, that this enterprise, even in our own regions of moral desolation, involves the missionary in such personal sacrifices, such privations and hardships, as require an elevation of piety, a firmness of religious principle, which not every Christian, not every minister, if called to the trial, would be found to possess.

The duty of Christians then to pray for those who are devoted to the missionary work, is unquestionable. It is a duty resulting from the magnitude of the *object* which this work aims to achieve, the *obstacles* it has to encounter, the *consequences* it involves, and the *labors* and *sacrifices* it requires.

In the review of this subject, permit me now to ask you brethren, is it not apparent that the magnitude of the missionary work, is but very inadequately understood and felt, by the world, or even by the church? You will excuse me if I enlarge upon an inquiry of so much practical interest.

The cause of missions is the cause of God. It was identified with Christianity itself, by the herald angels, who announced the Saviour's birth as "glad tidings, which shall be to *all people*." It was identified with christianity itself, by that broad commission of its divine Founder, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel." With this passage standing in the New Testament, what Christian can doubt on the subject? It is identified with Christianity itself by the lives and labors of

its first preachers; and by their claim on Christians to pray, and the undisputed obligation on Christians now to pray for its success.

I go farther, and affirm that the propagation of the gospel, by which I mean its extension beyond limits where it was before enjoyed, has always been accomplished chiefly, not to say solely, by what may properly be termed missionary means. But for these, it would seem that our ancient progenitors, and we as their descendants, must have been left in all the darkness of Druidism. Look then at what Christianity has done for the world;—for the interests of science, of government, of intellectual and social happiness;—above all, for the *spiritual* interests of immortal man, and say, if the diffusion of this religion is not an object great enough to command the approbation and aid of the most elevated minds.

It is time that this cause should stand upon its own claims, not as the cause of weak and visionary men, but as the cause of God. On this ground I rest its claims to day, and aver, that no man is great enough to look down upon it, as beneath his favorable regard. It is the same cause for which the Saviour shed his blood, and to which angels account it their privilege and honor to be ministering servants. It has a grandeur of object, the contemplation of which expands and elevates the soul, and throws into comparative littleness the common objects of human pursuit. I know that birth, wealth,

talent, military achievement, may confer what is called greatness, though often associated with moral debasement. Ask the *world* who has been great, and you are pointed to Wolfe, dying for his country ; to Chatham, ruling the decisions of her senate ; to Nelson, wielding the thunders of her navy. You are pointed perhaps to "Macedonia's madman," or to him of modern days, whom Europe looked at with dismay, as the scourge of nations, in his prosperity ; and in his adversity, as little less than "archangel ruined." But no man is great, who fails to fulfil the chief end of his immortal existence. No man is great, who forgets that God is greater than he. No enterprise is great, which is not approved by God, and which cannot properly be commended to him in prayer. Let characters and actions be tried by this standard, and how often would the hero, or the minister of state, amid the splendors of office, and the homage of admiring multitudes, be found a base and degraded man, in the eye of omniscience, when his heart and motives are compared with the exalted principles which the gospel inspires. When Napoleon reared his bloody banner, and marched to Moscow, millions stood appalled at the boldness of the enterprise; while no whisper of prayer, that God would bless that enterprise, ascended from any pious heart in Christendom. But when the Bible Society and the Missionary Society sent their messengers of mercy, to traverse the shores of the Baltic, these heralds of

the gospel might well be followed, in their labors of heavenly benevolence, by the prayers and benedictions of Christians. And when Buchanan explored the domains of pagan wretchedness in the East, not to multiply widows and orphans, not to spread havoc and death,—(as did the British arms in the ranks of Hyder Ally,) but to extend the empire of truth and holiness; well might Christians pray for his success, and well might the plains of Hindostan echo the glad welcome; “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings.”

That distinguished general, who turned the scale of victory in the greatest battle of modern days, doubtless feels himself to be now far more highly honoured, by the office he sustains as a missionary of the cross. Give me the heart of Brainerd, and his crown of righteousness, and even if I must share his bed of straw, I would not envy the luxuries of the great and the ungodly. Give me the honors that shall forever flourish on the brow of Henry Martyn, and I care not who carries away the hosannas of the world. Let me sleep like him in a humble and unfrequented grave, if I may awake like him at the last trump, and stand by his side in the resurrection of the just.

I say again, the missionary cause is the cause of God. The sentiments it inspires, expand and exalt the soul. It regards man as immortal, and stamps importance on the actions and interests of

time, just according to their influence on the interests of eternity. Actors, and actions, and events, which the world think most important, are those which most strongly excite present attention. These are often transient and temporary;—often limited in influence to one people, or one generation, perhaps to the affairs of the passing day. A revolution takes place in a kingdom,—anarchy rages,—the crown passes from one head to another, and all is quiet as before. War threatens to involve a continent. The elements gather for a tempest, with dark and portentous aspect. Clouds of angry combatants hasten towards the field of battle. Nations, in anxious suspense, fix their eyes on the scene of conflict. But the storm bursts,—the clouds disperse,—victors and vanquished lay aside their arms, and the affairs of the world go on as before. Greece stretches out her supplicating hands, and the sympathies of Christendom are awakened. Friends of humanity feel for fellow men, trampled down by a sanguinary despotism. But soon all this intense interest will subside. Greece will rise to freedom and independence,—or will sink under her load of hopeless calamities, or perhaps be blotted from the map of nations, and still the affairs of the great world will go on as before.

Now in the kingdom of Christ, things are to be estimated on a higher scale of computation. Here nothing is transient and temporary. Actors, actions, and events, become important, by a train of at-

tendant consequences, reaching onward into eternity. In this view, the proudest navy of Europe, with all the victories recorded in its annals of blood, has done nothing worthy of remembrance, compared with the enterprise accomplished by that little vessel, which brought our Puritan fathers, to plant the standard of true religion on this continent. In this view, the fitting out of the ship Duff, with the first band of Missionaries for the Islands of the Pacific, though regarded by many as a visionary scheme at the time, was truly a great and sublime undertaking. In its motives and its results, it is stamped with a character of greatness, which belongs to no Arctic expedition, no worldly enterprise of war or commerce.

On the same scale we must estimate the cause of domestic missions. The work in which various Christian societies, as well as our own, are honorably engaged, the work of establishing churches and spreading the institutions of the gospel, among the destitute regions of our own country, is a great work. Suppose that, in present and coming generations, the result of these efforts should be, to raise thousands from the darkness and degradation of sin, to the light, and liberty, and purity of the sons of God; and that flourishing churches shall exist, down to the end of the world, where, but for these efforts, all would have been involved in the aggravated heathenism of a Christian land; and see how this superposition invests the missionary cause not only with

a sacredness, but with a grandeur of design, surpassing all that is accounted great in the ordinary affairs of men.

Do we demand then that the world shall stop the movements of her secular machinery, and stand still, to gaze at the magnitude of these objects ? Certainly not. Let senates debate, and statesmen adjust the affairs of empires ;—let commerce spread its canvass, and drive on its schemes of gain, in every climate ; let science push its adventurous researches into regions of polar ice ; let genius multiply its resources of art, its mechanical inventions, its triumphs over the winds and tides ;—whatever else may be ranked among the useful or the honorable in human achievements, let it be regarded with approbation and interest by Christians. But let not God be shut out of his own world. Let not the interests of his church be accounted secondary to any other interests. The machinery of his moral kingdom must move on ; the subjects of this kingdom, while they mingle in the bustle and business of the world, must not forget that one object, which surpasses and absorbs, in its own greatness, all the objects of time.

We are then prepared for a *second* practical question, which is,—How can any consistent Christian forbear to lend his influence, and his aid to the cause of missions ? I speak not of Christians, if indeed there are any such in our churches, who are so poor or illiterate, as to be debarred from

the common means of information on this subject. All may have access at least to the New-Testament, the best book on missions that was ever published.

Say not that a man, well informed on other subjects, may happen to have little knowledge, and of course, little zeal on this,—and yet be a real Christian. I grant it ;—but he is not a *consistent* Christian. With his means of knowledge, he could not *happen* to be ignorant or indifferent on this subject, without a grievous fault in the state of his heart. Does this man pray ? For what objects, and with what spirit ? Does he ever repeat that form of prayer, which Christ taught his disciples ; “ Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” and still forget that cause, which is the great object of common interest to the pious, both on earth, and in heaven ? If the spirit of the gospel consists in diffusive benevolence,—if its blessings are of infinite value, unquestionably every *consistent* Christian will desire, and earnestly desire, that these blessings may be extended to his fellow men.

Besides, the cause of missions, I have said, is identified with Christianity itself, by the final command of the Saviour,—“ Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.” But on whom rests the obligation of this command ? On successive generations of Christians : on the collective church, to the end of the world. Must all Christians then

preach the gospel?—No. Must all that do preach the gospel be missionaries? No.—Men must go forth in this work, regularly designated for it, and sustained in it, by their brethren who remain at home.

But by what means shall the consistent Christian, who does not himself personally engage in missions, show his friendship to this cause? The answer is, chiefly by his voluntary contributions and his prayers.

We send forth a Missionary to the scattered families of a new settlement, or to the remnant of a savage tribe, still retaining its lingering existence among our own people. At the best he must struggle with hardship and self-denial. A poor man perhaps himself, he cannot, if he would, go on this warfare at his own charges. He may have an apostolic spirit; may be full of faith and the Holy Ghost;—but he cannot *live* on faith; he must have *bread*. It is not enough that we coldly commend his self-denial; it is not enough that we warmly commend it; it is not enough that we cordially wish him success. This devoted brother, while he foregoes the possibility of acquiring any thing more than a scanty subsistence, and wears out his life in arduous labors for the good of others,—surely has a right to expect, that prosperous Christians, in the midst of their abundance, will minister to his necessities, at least till he can find adequate means of support without their aid.

But there is another charity, which we owe to this brother, on many accounts far dearer to his heart, and that is to *pray for him*. The spirit of our subject, and the occasion of our present meeting, will urge this duty, with all its sacred obligations on those whom I address.

We assemble to day as friends of the missionary cause. We testify our friendship by our annual contribution. Will any of us be satisfied with this testimony, and thus dismiss the subject from our thoughts, for the rest of the year? Suppose that Paul were our Missionary, would he be satisfied with this? He would say, brethren, *pray for this holy cause*;—not at your missionary meetings merely, but pray for it in your solemn assemblies on the sabbath, pray for it in your families, pray for it in your closets.

If we may judge from the reports of this Society, its Missionaries have generally been men of like spirit with Paul. Their bosoms are warmed with human sensibilities, and sympathies, as well as Christian zeal. In traversing the wilderness, and visiting the cottages of poverty, amid the storms of winter, and the privations of social and domestic comforts, what can sustain and console their hearts, like the assurance that we, who send them on this self denying work, remember them in our prayers? Yes, they deserve to be thus remembered. By all that is solemn and tender in the obligations of Christian affection, we will admit their

appeal to our hearts, when they look to us and say,—Ministers and disciples of Christ, you have sent us hither on a great and difficult work. Our only hope of success is in God. When you supplicate his blessing on your own churches and families,—brethren pray for *us* also.

REPORT

OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

Published by order of the Society.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE first present to the Society a view of the MISSIONS IN NEW SETTLEMENTS.

THE Rev. Mr. DOUGLAS performed the service of two months, assigned to him at *Alfred* and the *vicinity*. All the labours of the year were performed at Alfred, with the exception of missionary service at *East Shapleigh* and *Waterborough*. Mr. Douglas laboured among the people of these neighbouring places, preaching, making family visits, and distributing the Society's books. Good attendance was given to his public discourses; and his family and personal instructions were gratefully received. Many families in *Waterborough* expressed to the missionary their delight and gratitude for the Society's remembrance of them. Exclusive of Alfred, he made in the vicinity 60 family visits and delivered 10 sermons.

THE Rev. Mr. CALEF performed a mission of two months; two weeks of which he spent in *Lyman*, two in *Waterborough*, one in *Hollis*, two in *Shapleigh*, and one in *Wakefield*. Most of his time while at Shapleigh, was spent in the West parish, where the prospect is encouraging. The congregational church has received accessions; and a house of worship was about to be erected.

THE Rev. Mr. KELLOGG commenced his mission among the people in *Perry* at the same time that he entered upon his Indian School—the last week in May; and was received by them with a cordial welcome. He prosecuted this mission, in connexion with his school, with uninterrupted health, though his labours were considerable for a person of his years. “It was my course,” he observes, “Friday after school to leave my humble lodgings and go among the Protestants, making pastoral visits, and feeding the sheep and lambs. I conversed on soul affairs, distributed the books of the society, read and expounded a chapter, and prayed, and sometimes sung a psalm or hymn. The town of Perry is eleven miles in length, and the roads, in some parts of it, in a bad state. The population is dispersed, and I had to travel on foot from house to house, which, in the heat of summer and in the rainy season of autumn, was attended with no small fatigue. I made, in the course of my mission, 297 family visits, chiefly of the pastoral kind; and, I would hope, endeavoured never to lose sight of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Burials were attended; the concert of prayer, and seasons of prayer and fasting; schools visited; and a monthly communion observed, upon which all the congregation attended, as spectators, with exemplary seriousness. Six additions were made to the church, and we had eight baptisms, and much seriousness was upon the minds of several persons when my mission closed. Some of the books your society sent me, I forwarded to suitable persons in the vicinity. The catechisms I distributed in Perry, and the children recited their lessons to me on Lord’s day. I had a Bible class of 30 members, 13 years old and upwards, which excited considerable interest, and I believe had a good moral effect upon parents and children. There are 100 Protestant families in town.—The whole town may be considered as united under my ministry, as is evinced by the yearly communication which you have received from a large committee, relative to my mission.—Perry is known to be truly missionary ground, in every sense of the word, both in

regard of the white inhabitants, and of the Indians, amounting, I should say, to 225 souls, in the summer season. The eyes of this population are lifted up to your Society from year to year, to receive their bread in due season ; and I feel constrained to implore your prayers for them, and for myself, and that your care of them may flourish again the present year.—I have felt a deep interest in the moral and spiritual concerns of the vicinity, and have many a time traversed it in all directions, and distributed books as a charity from your Society. I preached the last year two sabbaths at Robbinston, and administered the sacrament. I assisted in the dedication of the meeting-house at Calais also. There is now a Congregational church there, of perhaps 30 members, and a considerable congregation of our order.* The loss of brother Bigelow was severely felt by the deserving people of Lubec.†—I preached the sermon also, at the ordination of brother Lewis, last September, over the people of West Machias, where about 220 souls were hopefully brought to the saving truth in East and West Machias, the last year, and generally persevere in good works.”

THE Rev. Mr. PEET, beside his stated labours in *Norridgewock*, performed missionary service in *Fairfield*, *Mercer*, and *Canaan*. The little church in Mercer continues united and prosperous. “They highly prize gospel privileges, but are unable to support them. Four have been added to their number during the summer, making 31 in all.” In Canaan there is “a number of persons, who are much gratified to hear the gospel preached, and who enjoy the privilege only occasionally ; but, when they have opportunity, give good attention, and appear to be grateful for the favour.” Our missionary has laboured more of the time with his own people than usual, and

* The congregation has been collected, and the church gathered, since Mr. Kellogg visited that town in the service of this Society.

† Rev. Jonathan Bigelow, being in feeble health, had relinquished his ministry and mission at Lubec. See last year’s Report.

his labours have been more arduous than before. "It has been," he writes, "a time of unusual interest with us. We have been permitted to experience a 'time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.'—On the first sabbath in September, 28 persons were admitted to the church under my care.—I hope your Society will continue your mission. It has never been any more desirable than at present."

THE Rev. Mr. PARKER divided his labours between *Dresden* and *Pittston*. During his mission he preached 23 sermons, attended church, prayer, and conference meetings, visited the sick, attended funerals, and, with very few exceptions, for particular reasons, visited all the families connected with the Congregational church and society, and some others, where he believed his visits would be acceptable, and hoped they might be useful.—"Though there has been no special excitement in either place, the attention to the means of grace has been equal to that of any former period." The people of Dresden employed him for 6 sabbaths, in addition to his missionary service.

THE Rev. Mr. ADAMS preached every alternate sabbath at home. On sabbath evening, he attends a lecture in one of the extremities of the society. Once in two weeks, he meets a Bible class, in which a considerable number of the young people appear to be deeply interested; with which he has taken up the Bible in course, and made it his object to give them a full explanation of it, so far as he was capable of doing it. Once in each month, he attends a conference of the church, and the monthly concert of prayer.—On the intervening sabbaths he preaches alternately at *Winslow* (9 miles distant), and *Clinton* (14 miles distant). On these occasions he attends a conference on the Saturday previous; and on Sabbath evening meets a Bible class; "by which," he writes, "I hope a very important object will be gained; that of leading them to study their Bibles during my absence, and to endeavour to understand

what they read." He also visited from house to house, as circumstances seemed to require.—Additions have been made, during the year past, to the churches within the sphere of the mission. In reference to Vassalborough, he says: "In this place the number of communicants has increased since my settlement from 15 to about 90. At Winslow, when I commenced my labours, there were one or two professors of religion connected with a distant church, and a meeting house falling into ruins. Now their meeting house is thoroughly finished; a branch of our church, consisting of near 30 members, and a congregation, small, but regular in their attendance on divine worship.—At Clinton, six years since, there was a moral chaos; —now there is a branch of our church consisting of 17 exemplary members. They are in the habit of meeting every Sabbath day for religious worship; on those sabbaths when I am not present, prayers are offered by the brethren, and sermons are read. A neat meeting house is erected, the outside finished, and the whole to be completed in two months. A few members of my church reside in the village of Waterville, directly opposite to Winslow."

THE Rev. Mr. NOURSE spent the eight sabbaths of his mission with the people of *Mariaville*. During the time he preached 17 sermons on the sabbath, beside a funeral discourse, and two lectures. He also visited 8 schools. "These schools continue to flourish. The youth in this new settlement are growing up under favourable circumstances, and promise fair to become respectable for intellectual improvement. There is in the people a strong desire to hear the gospel, and they seem to hear with attention and interest."—A considerable number appear to have become penitent and pious; and others give hopeful evidence of piety. "Your kind assistance," writes the missionary, "has been thankfully received. Individuals among them have contributed—for your Society. The amount of these contributions is \$33,33."

THE mission of two months, assigned to Rev. Messrs. DOUGLAS and PAGE at *Cape Elizabeth*, has been accomplished. Beside preaching on the sabbath, and administering the Lord's Supper, our missionaries made very many family visits ; visited the sick and afflicted ; attended to a Bible class, formed there during this mission ; and distributed the Society's books. Mr. Douglas visited the Fort under the command of Major Brooks ; who sent his men to the public religious exercises of the sabbath. The attention of the officers and soldiers "indicated the greatest respect to the word preached." This is the first time of such attendance for many years ; and the attentions of Major Brooks to our missionary are respectfully acknowledged.—The church has now 25 members. "It is a languishing vine, and must be watered—or, ere the lapse of many years, become extinct." A licentiate preacher has recently made Cape Elizabeth his field of labour ; and his services are believed to have been acceptable and useful to this people, by whom he has been principally or wholly supported ; but the time of his continuance with them is uncertain. Our missionaries were cordially received and kindly treated ; and many thanks were returned, through them, to the Society.

IN the stated ministry of Mr. PAGE at *Limington* no material change has occurred during the past year. "Peace and harmony have uniformly prevailed in the church and society ; and the general attention to meetings for worship has, in no respect, diminished. The monthly concert has been observed, and sabbath schools kept up as usual. A Bible class has been instituted during the year, and is regarded with increasing interest. We feel encouraged to believe—that these desolations will at length be repaired, and this people again established in regular order. "With this encouragement," Mr. Page observes, "we readily associate the repeated and kindly aid, which we have received from your Society ; which I and my people would gratefully acknowledge, while we are under the necessity of imploring its still farther continuance."

THE services performed by Rev. Mr. HURD, out of his own parish in *Fryeburg*, have been devoted to the same people as the last year. One month of the time was devoted to the north parts of the town. The usual course of service was followed. "There is an encouragement," Mr. Hurd writes, "to labour in word and doctrine. I had a Bible class the last season, and two this. We had a sabbath school the last season, and three this.—I cannot but hope that the occasional services, which your charity is rendering to the destitute, will be productive of good."

THE Rev. Mr. SAWYER has performed the laborious mission of two months assigned to him in the Plantations on Penobscot river. He preached, on sabbaths, in *Dixmont*, *Foxcroft* (or rather in *Sangerville*, by exchange), *Exeter*, at *Page's Mills*, *Passadumkeag*, *Metanowcook* settlement 2 sabbaths, 2 in *Orono*, viz. at *Stillwater* and *Oldtown*, 2 in *No. 4*, in *No. 8*, and *Eddington*—12 sabbaths. He visited and preached lectures at *Old Lemon-stream*, *Passadumkeag*, and *Piscataquis*. The sermons, on this mission, were 37; visits, 80; sick persons and one school visited, several conferences and prayer meetings; the days employed, 68. The people were for the most part attentive to his instructions, and he was kindly received by them. The places recommended to the Society for exigency and hopeful prospect of useful missions, are, the settlements at *Cold stream* and the vicinity, containing about 80 families, and extending from *Penobscot* river about 16 miles; and on the *Penobscot*, above the *Piscataquis*, an extent of settlements about 25 miles up the river, on both sides. "I hope and pray," writes the missionary, at the close of his journal, "that the care and attention of the Society to these settlements may not be in vain."

THE Rev. Mr. STEELE performed early in the present year the mission to which he was appointed at the semiannual meeting in November of last year. He was at *Cooper* 5 sabbaths, and performed most of the public service on those days; and

while there, visited almost every family in the place, attended a church meeting, and an evening lecture, and, as his health permitted, did the work of an evangelist. The congregational church in Cooper consists of 13 members.

THE Rev. Mr. WESTON, beside his stated labours at *Lebanon*, the central place of his mission, performed missionary service at *Milton* and *Wakefield*. Milton, a town adjoining to Lebanon, had recently sustained a great loss in the death of the Rev. James Walker, "a pious and efficient missionary in the service of the New Hampshire Missionary Society, who well sustained the ministerial character both in the pulpit and out of it," and who acquired and retained general respect and esteem. The service performed by our missionary at Milton was opportune and well accepted. "There is a considerable congregational society there, destitute of the stated means of grace;" and there Mr. Weston spent several sabbaths, and some weeks, preaching frequently, and making many family visits. "During the time," he writes, "which I spent at Milton, there were cheering indications afforded, that God had not forsaken that people." At Wakefield, a town adjoining Milton, he preached 3 sermons, in different parts of the town, "to respectable audiences." In the religious state and circumstances of his own people, "there has been no special alteration during the past year;" yet his report expresses encouragement and hope. "During the year past," he writes, "we had a pretty flourishing sabbath school, and measures are now in operation to form among us a society auxiliary to the Maine Sabbath School Union."

MISSIONS

AMONG THE INDIANS.

Passamaquoddy Indians.

THE REV. MR. KELLOGG recommenced his school among the Passamaquoddy Indians the last week in May. The Indians appeared glad to see him. He found his school house in good order ; "and the children flocked into the school." During the term of the mission, the school was interrupted several weeks by a rare occurrence—an Indian election. The Indians were expecting a deputation of the Chiefs of the St. Johns and Penobscot tribes, to celebrate the election of a Lieutenant Governor. The Passamaquoddies "flocked in from all quarters, and great preparations were made for the induction of the Lieut. Governor elect into office. The abovenamed Chiefs with their suits arrived, and were received from their birches [canoes] on the shore of Schoodic with military display and affectionate hospitality. Before and during this celebration, six weeks were spent in Indian festivity—with the exception of the sabbath. Four bullocks were slain and eaten." Our missionary still found the opportunity of carrying forward the school, which he closed on the 10th of November. "And in reviewing the whole ground," he writes, "I cannot but hope some good has been done among the benighted Passamaquoddies. I confess my school has been rather militant the past season—but still we have kept possession of the field. I enclose you a specimen of writing—they do better on the slate than on paper. I have continued to drill them in Webster, and to give them English words, and spellings, and have laboured to instruct on moral subjects by the kind assistance of Sock Bason ; and kept up an intimacy in the Indian families, amid the turmoils of the last summer. When I left, things were tranquil ; and through the

season, if I were absent *one day*, the most solicitous inquiries were made for me at my lodgings. When I first went among them, only one Indian had a framed house; three more are now added. They have made improvements in fencing their land, and raising potatoes, and keeping swine.

"The aged and worthy Governor of the tribe has ever shewed me great respect and affection, and has discovered no hostility to my school." There was a time of false report and prejudice respecting the school. "All this while," writes Mr. Kellogg, "my school moved along slowly; and the young chiefs from St. Johns and Penobscot, came into it frequently, and took lessons."

Stockbridge Indians.

The Committee, not having received all the expected advices concerning the Stockbridge Indians, are not prepared to recommend a specific appropriation to them. The mission is still promising.

Narragansets, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket.

Mr. Baylies has taught the Indian Schools, and employed additional instructers, in Narraganset, Nantucket, Gay Head, Christiantown, and Chabaquiddick. In these schools he had 207 Indian scholars, and 67 whites; total 274. Of the Indians, 109 were writers, 84 read in the Testament, 73 in the Spelling book, 50 in the Alphabet; and they answered 18,176 questions in Colburn's Arithmetic. The scholars were taught 81 weeks. Our missionary was "treated with respect by the scholars, with gratitude by the parents, and with friendship by neighbours."

He spent the sabbaths, as usual, at the various stations, as circumstances would permit, and for the most part, the meetings were as well attended, as could be expected. The books and tracts were thankfully received. Mr. B. first supplied the

schools, and then disposed of the remainder where he thought they would do good. The ministers, in the vicinity of his stations, Mr. Thaxter, Mr. Brown, Mr. Swift, and Mr. Bailey, with many other gentlemen too numerous, he says, to mention, "are my friends and advisers in this important work." After all successful example, and in accordance with the advice, of Rev. Mr. Brown, our missionary established a sabbath school at Narraganset, and the Indians promised to continue it. At Gay Head the Indians have established a sabbath school, which is well attended. At Chabaquiddick, Peter Belait, a man of colour, has taught a sabbath school for several years, "which is doing great good."

THE Books of the Society, including Bibles and Testaments received by the Secretary from the Massachusetts Bible Society, have been distributed through the missions by our missionaries; and for these donations, as well as for the very acceptable and useful labours of our missionaries, many thanksgivings have been rendered to the Divine Benefactor, and to the Society as instrumental to his beneficence.

To facilitate the execution of the design of the Society, and to ensure the direction of its grants to the most necessitous and to the fairest claimants, the Society, at its last annual meeting, appointed Rev. Mr. DOUGLAS to a mission of survey for three months, instructing him to make diligent inquiry on this subject in the most destitute settlements, and to make report. The survey has been made, and a Report forwarded to the Secretary, and communicated to the Select Committee, to whom it was very satisfactory. Mr. Douglas visited 21 towns, where, he assures us, our missionaries would be cordially received. He recommends, that the destitute towns be divided into districts, and that the Society employ some of the ministers settled in this wilderness to perform missionary service in the several districts. The annual appropriation having been already made

for this year, the Committee could act but very partially upon this recommendation ; but they have appointed Rev. Mr. Fargo of Solon, for one month, to labour in Bingham, Moscow, and Canada Road, composing one of the proposed districts.

The Committee cannot conclude their Report without expressing a deep sense of the loss which they feel, and which the Society has sustained, in the death of their late respected **PRESIDENT**. His assiduous attention to the object and the concerns of the Society for thirty-five years, as a member, and his faithful discharge of the duties of its President for twenty years, are called into remembrance with affectionate emotion, and will leave on our minds an indelible impression of respect for his memory. For his annual contributions to the funds of the Society in his life, and the legacy bequeathed to them at the close of it, "the poor" who have had, and those who will "have the gospel preached to them," through his means, "will rise up and call him blessed."

By order of the Select Committee,

A. HOLMES, *Secretary.*

October, 29, 1827.

November 1, 1827. The **REPORT** was adopted by the Society, and ordered to be printed.

Voted, that Dr. PORTER, of Roxbury, Dr. CHAPLIN, and Dr. LOWELL, be a Committee, to present the thanks of the Society to the Rev. Professor PORTER for his Sermon, delivered before them this day, and to request a copy for the press.

A. HOLMES, *Secretary.*

FUNDS OF THE SOCIETY.

Account of the Stock and Income for 1827.

	Nominal Value	Probable Income,
Union Bank Stock	\$ 3300	165
Bonds and Mortgages	22400	1344
Massachusetts Bank Stock	1000	50
N. E. Marine Insurance Co. Stock	1200	60
Columbian Bank Stock	800	40
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$28700	1659
Deduct amount of John Alford's Donation, with its proportion of Income, being for the exclusive use of the Indians	9000	524 50
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Amount of general fund	\$19700	1138 50

Cash on hand \$184.49.

JUNE.	Received through the Rev. N. Douglas, collected in Shapleigh	}	\$10
OCT.	Received of Hon. J. Phillips, legacy of the late President of the Society, Hon. William Phillips	}	5000*
Nov.	Collection at the Church in Chauncy-Place, Semi-annual meeting	}	100.88
"	Collections made through the Rev. J. Kellogg from inhabitants of Perry	}	42

OFFICERS

ELECTED 31 MAY, MDCCCXXVII.

- Hon. JONATHAN PHILLIPS, *President.*
- Rev. ELIPHALET PORTER, D. D. *Vice President.*
- Rev. AEIEL HOLMES, D. D. LL. D. *Secretary.*
- Rev. JOHN PIERCE, D. D. *Assistant Secretary.*
- PLINY CUTLER, Esq. *Vice Treasurer.*

* Invested in "City Bank" Stock.

SELECT COMMITTEE.

ALDEN BRADFORD, Esq. EDWARD TUCKERMAN, Esq. LEVI HEDGE, LL.D. and Rev. BENJAMIN B. WISNER—with the President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

MISSIONARIES.

		months.
Rev. Nathan Douglas	Mission of survey,	3
Jonathan Calef,	Alfred and vicinity,	2
Elijah Kellogg,	Perry and Indians,	5
Freeman Parker,	Dresden and vicinity,	2
Thomas Adams,	Vassalborough and vicinity,	2
Peter Nourse,	Vicinity of Ellsworth,	<i>8 sabb's.</i>
Caleb F. Page,	Limington,	1
Carlton Hurd,	Fryeburg,	2
John Sawyer,	Plantations on the Penobscot,	2
James Weston,	Lebanon and vicinity	<i>6 weeks.</i>
Josiah Peet,	Norridgewock and vicinity,	<i>1 month.</i>
Marshfield Steele,	Cooper,	1
George W. Fargo, at Bingham, Moscow, and Concord, and Canada Road Settlement,		1

From the Alford Fund.

Indians at Stockbridge and Green Bay, deferred.

F. Baylies, for Instruction of Indians on Martha's Vineyard,
Narraganset, and Nantucket, } \$350

Rev. E. Kellogg, in proportion to the time devoted to the
Passamaquoddy Indians.

FORM OF A BEQUEST, OR LEGACY.

Item : *I give and bequeath the sum of _____ to the Society for propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America : to be applied either to the general objects of the Institution, or to such particular purposes, consistent with those objects as the Donor may think proper.*

THE END.

